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TABLE 2

611 ANNUAL CONSUMPTION OF BASIC FOODSTUFFS IN PRE-WAR EASTERN EUROPE

(in lbs.)

	Wheat & Rye	Maize	Potatoes	Sugar	Meat	Milk	Fats	Eggs (No.)
Poland	392	—	550	27	50	260	21	90
Czechoslovakia	275	25	260	47	68	220	40	160
Hungary	550	—	220	26	57	240	30	95
Romania	245	400	110	15	55	140	25	90
Yugoslavia	265	340	130	12	44	160	18	45
Bulgaria	440	—	85	12	45	150	19	80
Denmark	265	Nil	250	117	124	410	67	115

* *Agrarian Problems from the Baltic to the Aegean*, pp. 44.

241 The land, some of it rich, but most of it poor, was exploited
311 in a backward fashion – in Bulgaria and Yugoslav Macedonia many of the peasants worked with a wooden plow not very different in design from one described by Virgil in the *Georgics* 19 hundred years before. The inevitable subdivision of the land among the peasant's sons made application of modern agricultural techniques virtually impossible, and the accumulation of sufficient capital to purchase such equipment out of question. In addition, growing rural over-population kept farm wages low, and made the use of modern machinery uneconomical from the peasants' point of view. [435] Above all, the peasantry was oppressed by the traditional "price scissors," or the disparity between the prices received for their crops on the urban market and prices paid for industrial products, a relationship which arose from the "small domestic market for agricultural products and the small supply of manufactured goods produced by domestic industry."[19]

But the trouble lay not merely in the backwardness of the peasant agricultural system. The political structure of the country, either conservative or semi-fascist, tended to favor urban groups. In the allotment of national resources such projects as peasant

[19] Moore, p. 89.

tares. On the poorest land in the country a peasant with five hectares had to deliver almost twice as much per hectare as a peasant with two hectares.[12] In Romania, a peasant with four hectares of land was required to deliver three-and-a-half times as much produce per hectare as a peasant holding two hectares of land.[13] This pattern was followed throughout the area.

Prices paid for produce were invariably low and insofar as comparison is possible, lower than pre-war prices, as manifest in the huge discrepancies between free market prices and State prices. Moreover, the discrepancy between the prices paid to the peasantry and prices charged in retail shops for the same commodities far exceeded the cost of transportation and processing incurred by the State. In some cases a "coupon" system, ostensibly designed to compensate the peasant, was instituted. Under these terms, foodstuffs and industrial crops delivered to official collection centers were paid for by small sums in currency and coupons entitling the peasant to buy, at low controlled prices, in State shops. In practice, the system generally proved to be nothing more than a propaganda device. Since consumer goods were in short supply, and usually reserved for the urban market, the villages were frequently without such basic commodities as matches and kerosene.

Nevertheless, the confiscatory tax and delivery schedules were seldom fully enforced. It has, in fact, been demonstrated that literal enforcement was impossible, since in countless cases the State demands *exceeded* the individual peasant's capacity to produce. The quota levels and the severe legal punishments decreed for quota arrears were not, however, entirely unrealistic. The penalties prescribed for under-delivery were invoked only when it suited the regime purposes for a gradual extension of control over the agrarian economy. The effect of cumulative delivery failures was intended to reduce the independent peasant to the status of a tenant at sufferance, since he could be legally expropriated whenever the State chose.

The control the State exercised over industrial and financial sectors of East European economies was similarly an important weapon in the campaign against the peasant. As a result of heavy industrial emphasis, the agricultural sector was generally denied help from nationalized credit institutions. Insofar as credit was ex-

[12] Decree of the Ministry of Bulk Purchasing, January 30, 1953.
[13] *Scanteia*, (Bucharest). May 18, 1950.

CHART XV

WORK TIME IN HOURS NEEDED TO PURCHASE*

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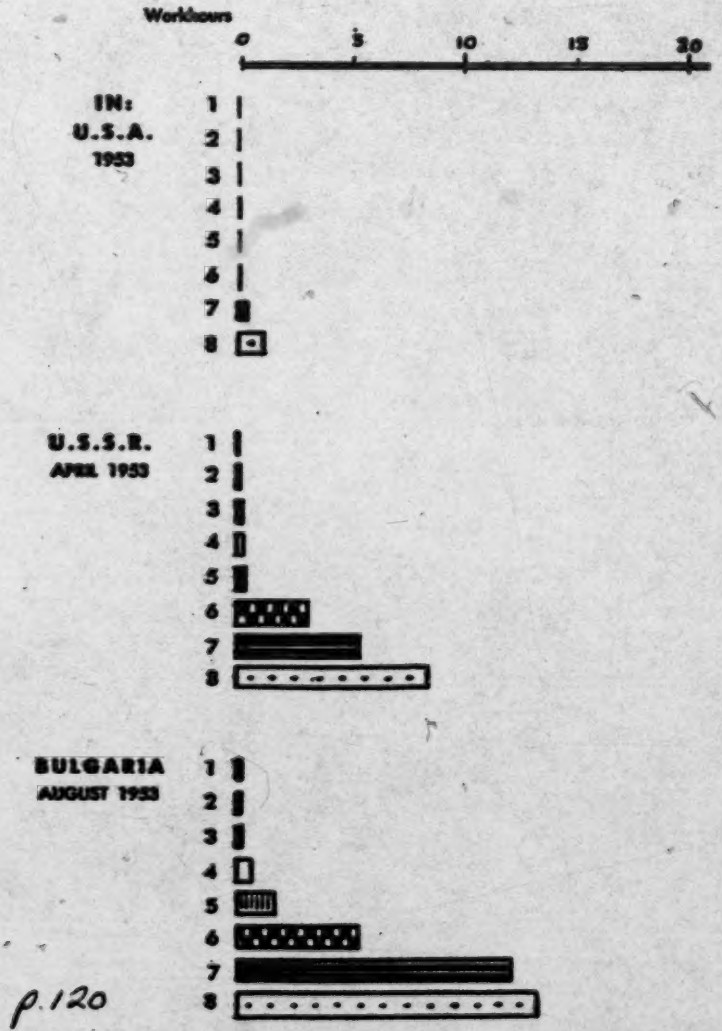
1	POTATOES	1 Kg.	5	MILK	1 L.
2	CABBAGE	1 Kg.	6	SUGAR	1 Kg.
3	EGG	1 En.	7	PORK	1 Kg.
4	BREAD	1 Kg.	8	BUTTER	1 Kg.

1 Kg = 2.2046 lbs. 1 L = 1.06 Qt.



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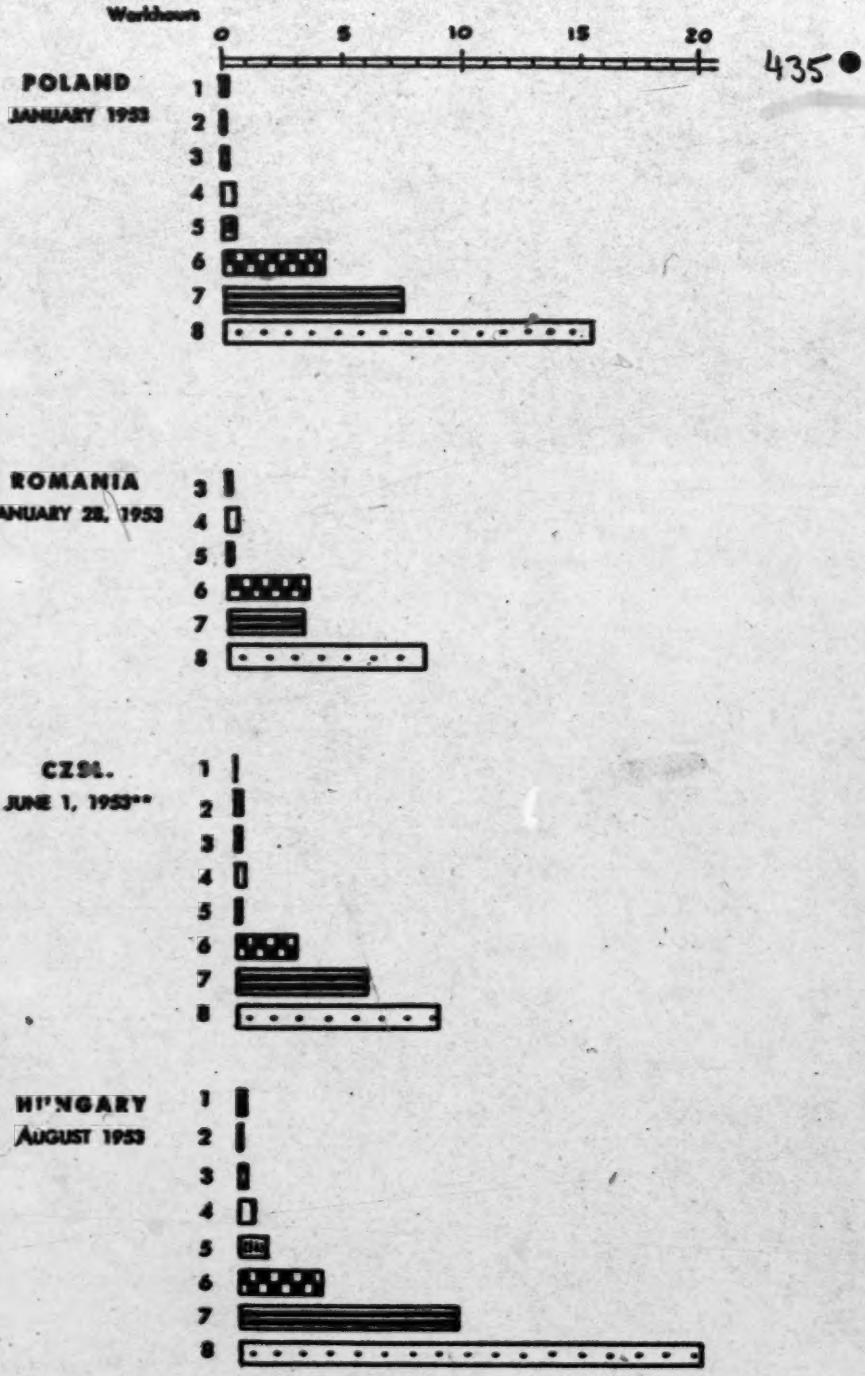

* Official U. S. Government statistics.

** Post Currency Reform — Black Rye Bread (White Bread = 1.09)

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(about £1) for Roumania, Lei 2,000 for Bulgaria, Lei 3,000 for Poland; as against Lei 15,000 for Germany and Lei 42,000 for Switzerland. So far as mechanical equipment is concerned, the disparity was even greater. According to a German source, taking the mechanical equipment per hectare of farm land (in terms of weight) as 100 for Germany, the figure for Bulgaria would be 14, for Yugoslavia 5, for Roumania 3.' (Ibid. p. 32).

A comparison of the extent to which fertilizers are used is equally unfavourable, as can be seen from the following table :

USE OF ARTIFICIAL FERTILIZERS, 1930-1940
(KILOS PER HECTARE OF ARABLE LAND)

	Nitrates	*Phosphates*	*Potash*
Czechoslovakia ..	4.4	8.9	5.0
Poland	1.1	2.3	1.4
Hungary	0.1	0.9	0.1
Yugoslavia ..	0.1	0.4	0.1
Roumania ..	0.02	0.06	0.01
Bulgaria	0.01	0.00	0.00
Germany	18.0	21.4	31.3
France	7.0	17.6	8.7
Denmark	10.7	24.1	7.9

(Ibid. p. 31)

There are a number of other factors which influence the welfare of the agricultural population. The Eastern European peasants suffered from the bad organisation of the marketing of their produce. Two examples will suffice. In Zürich 63 per cent of the retail price of milk went to the milk producer (the rest was divided between wholesale trade, retail and transport), and in Copenhagen 65 per cent; even in the United States where milk is delivered over very great distances the farmer got 46.8 per cent. As against this in Warsaw he got only 30 per cent, and in Belgrade 37.5 per cent (Ibid. pp. 94-5). The Survey of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, *World Agriculture* (1932), tells of a typical Rumanian barley farm, from which barley to the value of Lei 1,006 was sold. But the middlemen's profits and transport charges before the grain left Rumania amounted to Lei 1,202 (p.106).

The high prices of essential industrial goods further militated against the prosperity of the peasants.

The expensiveness of industrial compared with agricultural products in the period before the second world war is revealed by the following index figures of the variation of agricultural and industrial prices in Hungary (July figures):

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	1913	1925	1929	1933	1936	1937
Agricultural ..	100	125	114	57	71	80
Industrial ..	100	138	133	107	117	125

(E. Hertz, *The Economic Problem of the Danubian States*, London, 1947, p. 194)

The same phenomenon was expressed some time before World War II by a Croatian peasant speaking thus to an English investigator:

'Life is getting more and more difficult. The prices we can obtain are so very low. Look, before 1914 I could get two pair of boots for a hundredweight of wheat. Today I must give two hundredweights of wheat in exchange for one pair of boots. For one kilogram of nails, I must give one kilogram of wool. When I sold a sheep before 1914, I could buy fifty metres of cottons in exchange. Now I cannot get fifty metres of cotton-stuff even for four sheep.

'Things are no better on the coast of Dalmatia either. Before 1914 they could get a suit of clothes for a hectolitre of wine. Today they must give three hectolitres of wine for a suit. Before 1914 they could get ten boxes of matches for a litre of wine, today they must give a litre of wine for every single box.' (P. Lamartine Yates and D. Warriner, *Food and Farming in Post-War Europe*, London, 1943, p. 28).

High taxation added to the difficulties of the mass of peasants in Eastern Europe.

Last but not least, there was the burden of debts, a result of the poverty of the peasants and a very important contribution to it.

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There are two main groups of countries today whose agricultural populations enjoy a relatively high standard of living—on the one hand the corn and meat producing countries with large, highly mechanized farms (U.S.A., Canada and Australia), and on the other hand, countries like Denmark, Switzerland, Holland and Belgium which go in for intensive production of dairy products, meat and vegetables. In both cases only 20-30 per cent of the whole population is engaged in agriculture, the well-organised and highly developed agriculture being the accompaniment of an advanced industrial organization. The highly mechanized, extensive producers are dependent on a huge, world-wide market, the intensive producers are dependent on the existence of an urban population

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423 474 In the Trial the defendant Nikola Pavlov stated that for some years up to the end of 1948 there had been 'a strict quota system which oppressed the peasants'. ' . . . the quota system attained such proportions, that almost everything produced by the peasants was taken away from them, according to this order, and only such a part was left to them, which could only cover the current needs of their families. The quota system included almost all rural produce which served for direct consumption by the population, such as wool, eggs, meat, milk, potatoes, even including apples, chestnuts and peanuts . . . ' This produced a sharp reaction. 'The peasants not only did not sow all areas that they had sown till then, but began to diminish them'. The deposition of Kostov showed very clearly that the poor peasants suffered no less from the quota system than the rich and medium peasants, and were no less discontented. 'The discontent of the poor peasants was also caused by the decree for the collection of wool . . . according to which even peasants owning 1 or 2 sheep were not exempted from the delivery of wool'.*

● 435 474 423 The extreme hardship the quota deliveries imposed on the peasants is illustrated by the fact that in 1948 they totalled about 11 milliard leva, while free market sales totalled only 715 million.

How low had been the prices paid for the products taken from the peasants is revealed by the extent to which they were raised after the June Plenum: hard wheat was raised from 19 leva per kilogram to 25 (31.6 per cent); ordinary wheat from 17 to 23 leva (35.3 per cent); rye and oats from 15 to 20 leva (33.3 per cent); barley, millet seed and corn from 13 to 18 leva (38.5 per cent); sunflower seed from 25 to 30 leva (20 per cent); dried beans from 30 to 60 leva (100 per cent); lentils from 44 to 55 leva (25 per cent). (*Otechestven Front*, 2nd July, 1949).

*The question arises why we accept this part of the evidence when we consider the Trial as a whole to be a frame-up. (See pp. 301-2). It is one thing to believe in the reality of the meat shortage, the obnoxious character of the quota system and so on—which are known to everyone who lives in the country—and another to believe that only Kostov and his co-defendants were responsible for it, while the rest of the leadership saw nothing of it for three or four years. If we look back at the 'trials' of 'witches' in the middle ages, we may disagree with the 'prosecutor' when he accused the 'witch' of causing the outbreak of a plague, but still accept the accusation as evidence of the existence of a plague at the time.

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